

## ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a polynucleotide having a sequence encoding a peptide or polypeptide of Smac having at least two contiguous amino acid residues derived from at least residues 56-139 of SEQ ID NO:1 and of which up to 184 contiguous amino acid residues can be derived from residues 56-239 of SEQ ID NO:1, a functional variant of each or a functional equivalent of each, each of which is capable of specifically binding to at least a portion of an Inhibitor of Apoptosis protein. This peptide can be used in a method to modulate apoptosis or to identify modulators of apoptosis as well as in therapeutic uses.

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